

DRIVER/ENTRY VENTILATION SYSTEM FOR A BUS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention:

[0001] The present invention relates to ventilation systems for busses, and, more particularly, to a dash integrated duct system for delivering heated and air conditioned air to the driver and entry areas of a school bus.

2. Description of the Problem:

[0002] School busses have often been equipped with primitive heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, sometimes added to the vehicle as an after market accessory. After market systems are often free air systems and can produce highly uneven temperatures through the vehicle's passenger compartment and may be of limited effectiveness at defogging and defrosting either the vehicle's windshield or the windows surrounding and in the entry door to the vehicle located opposite the driver's station at the front of the bus. Legal requirements exist relating to keeping windows in the entry area and well clear of frost and fog.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] According to the invention there is provided an air distribution system for a bus having a dashboard positioned at the front of an interior of the bus and running from side to side of the bus. An entry is provided at the front end and to one side of the bus with an entry well being located adjacent the entry below the floor level of the interior of the bus. A plurality of windows are collocated with and near the entry door to help a

driver controlling the entry door in seeing people, particularly children, outside of the vehicle and near the door. A vertically elongated slit outlet, or multiple, smaller outlets vertically aligned on one another, from the dashboard are oriented toward the entry well adjacent the door to direct forced air against a plurality of the windows associated with the entry. A first blower provides for dash defrost and driver station air outlets and a second blower is provided for the entry way outlets. A further plurality of outlet ducts coupled to receive air from the air treatment unit and located under a vehicle windshield are oriented to direct treated air against the vehicle windshield. Outlet ducts from the dashboard near a steering wheel are oriented to direct air from behind the steering wheel toward the driver. Outlets are also directed from the dash toward driver side windows.

[0004] Additional effects, features and advantages will be apparent in the written description that follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objects and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0006] Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a school bus of a type with which the invention is advantageously employed.

[0007] Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a driver's station and entry from the interior of the bus of Fig. 1.

[0008] **Fig. 3** is a perspective view of the ventilation system as adapted for use along the entry side of the vehicle.

[0009] **Fig. 4** is a perspective view of the ventilation system as it fits in a dash with an alternative outlet for the entry side.

[0010] **Fig. 5** is a cross-sectional view of a portion of the ventilation system.

[0011] **Fig. 6** is an elevation showing air distribution patterns across an entry way door.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0012] Referring now to the figures, **Fig. 1** shows a school bus **10** having an elongated body **12** enclosing a passenger compartment. Bus **10** has a driver's side **14** and an entry side **16**, on which passengers can embark on and disembark from the bus. A number of entry area windows **18** are located adjacent to and in a door on the entry side **16**. Driver side windows **13** are located toward the front of elongated body **12** along the driver's side **14**.

[0013] Referring now to **Fig. 2**, a passenger entry way or door **20** has a plurality of entry way windows **18** through which a vehicle operator seated behind steering wheel **22** may observe events outside the vehicle adjacent the forward portion of bus **10** and along the entry side **16**. The ventilation system of the present invention distributes air to entry way windows **18** to clear the windows of fog and frost. A plurality of vertically aligned outlet ducts **22** are provided through entry side section **24** of dashboard **25** to distribute air across entry way windows **18** set in door **20** including downwardly into a

well **17** adjacent the bottom end of door **20**. A side outlet **30** from entry side section **24** directs air forced from the ventilation system upwardly against an entry way window **18** located forward from door **20**. Well **17** can, due to frequent boardings during cool, wet mornings, become a repository of moisture contributing to fogging of windows **18**.

[0014] Dashboard **25** extends from side to side across the front end of an enclosed passenger compartment for bus **10** under a windshield **26**. Various additional outlet ducts are incorporated into the dashboard **25** to provide air to the driver and air flow to the windows located in the front portion of the vehicle. Among the outlet ducts are a series of defrosting ducts **32** located under windshield **26** along the edge of dashboard **25** adjacent the bottom of the windshield. A side outlet duct **34** is positioned along the driver's side **14** of bus **10** for clearing windows on that side. Outlet ducts **36** from the dashboard **25** on either side of steering wheel **22** provide heating and possibly cooling air to a driver seated behind the wheel. All of the outlet ducts are molded into dashboard **25** and align with ductwork behind the dashboard and to direct air as required by the particular layout of the windows of a given vehicle.

[0015] Referring to **Fig. 3**, an HVAC unit **226** of a ventilation system **300** is illustrated. HVAC unit **226** draws air through a fresh air intake **232** located forward of the vehicle cowl and into a heater/evaporator coil plenum **261**. Above plenum **261** are two blowers, a dash blower **280** and a dedicated entry way blower **282** drawing treated air through the plenum. Both blowers are situated within entry side dashboard **24**. Entry way blower **282** has attached at one end thereof a turned duct **236** which spreads into a vertically elongated entry way fan vent **222**. Fan vent **222** provides an vertically elongated, narrow air outlet **223** directed rearwardly into the passenger compartment of the vehicle. Entry way fan vent **222** fits butted against the back major face of the entry side dash board **24**, aligned with the plurality of entry way outlet vents **32**, which provide direction and widespread distribution for air flowing from outlet **223** toward the windows

of the bus's entry way area.

[0016] Dash blower **280** forces air upwardly through openings **290** and **292** into a central distribution plenum **227**. Located toward the driver's side of the vehicle from plenum **227** is a distribution duct **234** which transports air to a plurality of outlet ducts oriented to provide air to a driver. Mode door **251** is located below intake **232** behind plenum **261** and is used to direct air to other defrost/defog vents.

[0017] In Fig. 4 a driver's side of the ventilation system **300** is illustrated including the main distribution duct **234** located within dashboard **25**. Extending back from distribution duct **234** to the passenger compartment face of dashboard **25** are a plurality of subsidiary ducts **304**, **305** and **307**, each of which have outlets oriented into the passenger compartment and which are associated with, and aligned on, ducts from the panel into the passenger compartment. Parallel to and located above main distribution duct **260** is a defrost distribution duct **302** from the central plenum **227** which lies just under the upper surface of dashboard **25**. Ventilation system **300** is integrated into dashboard **25**.

[0018] Referring now to Fig. 5, which is a cross sectional view of ventilation system **300** taken along section lines 5-5 of Fig. 5, the relative positions of main distribution duct **260** and defrost distribution duct **302** are illustrated. Defrost distribution duct **302** communicates with a plurality of outlet ducts **32** located along the top of dashboard **25**.

[0019] Fig. 6 illustrates the distribution patterns **A** and **B** from outlet ducts **22** and **30**, respectively, illustrating the forced diffusion of air from the ducts toward the interior surfaces of entry way windows **18** in door **20** and above dashboard **25** forward from the door. Forced heated or cooled area should reach substantially all of the surface area of windows **18** facing the vehicle's interior to clear mist or frost from the windows. Pattern

A is a narrow, vertically elongated fan of air, angled by ducts **22** to intersect the windows **18** mounted in door **20** substantially across the breadth of the windows. Duct **30** is similarly outwardly canted to direct air flow on a path intersecting windows **18** forward from door **20**.

[0020] The invention provides an effective, dashboard integrated ventilation system which accommodates the need on school busses to provide fog and frost removal from entry way area windows.

[0021] While the invention is shown in only one of its forms, it is not thus limited but is susceptible to various changes and modifications without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.